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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : EUR - Mr. Keller

FROM : GER - Martin J. Hillenbrand

SUBJECT: High Altitude Flights in the Berlin Corridors

GER DATE: December 10, 1959

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Reference: Bonn's 1083, Tab A. 162.72

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By HR-M 132, USA, Date 8/19/59

Initial Embassy reaction to the formula worked out in GER and presented to the President last week by the Secretary on resumption of high flights is recorded in the reference telegram. The message also incorporates technical comment from USHER, USAFE, BASC and the FAA Field Office in Paris. The gist of the message is that while technically feasible and some improvement over the "de facto" situation which exists, the formula is far from an ideal arrangement insofar as air safety is concerned, with particular regard to its acceptability by commercial aircraft and civil pilots.

Bonn's telegram suggests several alternatives or corollaries:

1. Beginning the technical discussion with the Soviets in BASC on the basis of the present quadripartite agreed rules for corridor flights (DAIR/P(45) Second Revise) which contain a standard formula for corridor crossing at all altitudes. It is argued that existing arrangements (largely honored in the breach by the Soviets for some years) would have the advantage of sharing all available air-space with the Soviets, reduce the plausibility of charges they might bring under the proposed formula that we were attempting to pre-empt airspace; and place us in a stronger public position if, after technical discussions fail to produce Soviet agreement, we had to resume high flights without their concurrence.

2. JCS working level personnel, while still awaiting comments from USCINCEUR, indicated their agreement with and support for Bonn's suggestions outlined in paragraph 1 above.

3. JCS personnel also expressed interest in and support for Bonn's proposals to discuss establishment of a quadripartite Safety Center with complete control of flight safety in the corridors in accordance with ICAO rules or a Flight Advisory Service to replace the present BASC.

Insofar as conversations with the British and French are concerned I see no difficulty in introducing these other proposals in addition to the formula approved by the President. Indeed, if we do not, it is likely that the British or French may raise these identical proposals since they are as familiar with all aspects of the problem as we are.

As noted in the interim telegram to Bonn, sent to you today for signature, the critical problem at this stage is securing British and French consent to limiting discussions

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discussions with the Soviets to purely technical matters and determining how firmly the former will support our resumption of C-130 flights should we find ourselves forced to such action without Soviet consent.

Only after thorough discussion with the British and French reveals the extent of their support will it be useful for the Secretary to seek the President's approval for informing the Soviets of our intentions.

Tab B is the revised text of the formula incorporating technical comment made by Bonn.

Atts:

Tab A.
Tab B.

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